

# *Draft Program and Principles of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela*

by Presidential Commission to Organize the PSUV

January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008

Below is a translation of the draft program and principles of the provisionally named United Socialist Party of Venezuela, which are currently being discussed at its founding congress. The documents were drafted by the provisional leadership of the PSUV.

Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez made his first public call for the creation a political instrument to unify the country's revolutionary forces in December 15, 2006. Convened on January 12, 2008, some 1,676 congress delegates elected from almost 15,000 socialist battalions—local units of the PSUV—will discuss and debate this draft program, as well as the proposed principles and statutes of the new party, over the next two months. In between congress sessions, delegates will return to their local regions and battalions to ensure the widest possible discussion of these documents among the ranks of the new party.

## *Draft Program*

---

### *I. About the program*

All revolutionary organisations contain three essential elements:

1. A politico-ideological doctrine
2. A critical analysis of the past and present, and
3. A program for an ideal future with the methods of action through which to make possible the transition from the present to this ideal future.

This program for the future is a "catalogue" of solutions to the evils of the past and present. It is the product of a mixture of discontent with what one has and the hope for what one aspires to have; an amalgam of bitterness and illusion. There are programs that focus essentially on the ethical and legal and there are others that seek to first find a solution to the social-economic problem.

The methods of action contemplate, in a mixed or simple form, one of various types of "evolutionism" or "revolutionism". Although, in some cases, those that adopt a "gradualist" evolutionary method to start with, get to a point where they agree to accept the possibility of "revolution" as a last resort, once the doors in the democratic system have been closed off.

Of course, all methods of action lead to an end: the taking and exercising of power. This is because possessing power signifies the possibility - the only concrete one - of directly carrying out in practice the programs for substituting one political structure for another, and for changing a defective society for an ideal society. A political party that does not aspire in some way to take power has no reason to exist.

Therefore, all programs should contain a "catalogue" of solutions and the manner in which (times, moments and places) these solutions can be carried out, understanding that not all elements of this program can be applied rigidly, indiscriminately and indefinitely in times or places where conditions are not the same or similar to those when they were first conceived of. That is why, although the Declaration of Principles or the Statutes of an organisation tend to

be more permanent, its program or programs of action have to be periodically revised by the organisation (leadership bodies and congresses). New possibilities and new necessities are constantly emerging, as well as new problems and new solutions. In regards to the "Programs" of the traditional politics, they were something which that that were to suffer from were not to be told about.

## *II. The program of the PSUV*

### *1. Defence of the revolution. Build socialism*

Taking as its starting point the championing and unconditional defence of the government of the Bolivarian revolution, led by President Hugo Chavez, and the will of the Venezuelan people to construct the socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the program of the PSUV is the instrument with which to set out the objectives, forms and methods of this revolutionary project, and express them at each moment through slogans that can facilitate the transition from the immediate reality to the end goal; slogans that, by definition, adapt themselves permanently to the immediate circumstances.

### *2. Internationalism*

The Bolivarian socialist revolution is unfolding within an international framework and a national reality. The programmatic definitions are therefore rooted in two different spheres: on one side, in the will for transformation based on an interpretation of the material fundamentals of historical development at the world scale and, on the other, in the immediate conditions of our country at a given moment.

Basing itself on the Bolivarian tradition, the program of the PSUV champions internationalism and takes as its starting point the belief that the grand objectives of the revolution will have only been obtained when the Latin American and Caribbean people obtain unity and national and social emancipation, and together with the people of all the world we have buried capitalism in order to open the door to a new era in the history of humanity.

But the concept of internationalism that the Party holds is not one of simple "international fraternisation between peoples", nor one of simply exhortations for "tolerance". The Party fights to create a truly international united front of the peoples that is anti-imperialist and confronts the aberrations that imperialism pretends to universalise where they appear.

The PSUV will work tirelessly to:

- Favour all activities that favour the unity of the people based, more than just on a simple exchange, but on the principle of "doing things together", so that the people get to know each other and feel a commitment to each other.
- Diversify international relations and create new alliances in order to construct new axes, different to those favoured by the interests of the international market, transnationals and neoliberalism.
- Favour a solidarity-based exchange of resources with other countries, particularly with Latin America and the Caribbean, where the solidarity-based and humanist dimension prevails over merely commercial interests.

### *3. Build Popular Power. Socialise power*

The program of the PSUV has as its objective making reality the slogan "in order to end poverty you have to give power to the poor", or better said: the people. That is to say, build a government based on Councils of Popular Power, where workers, campesinos, students and popular masses are direct protagonists in the exercising of political power.

The program of the PSUV proposes the socialising of political power, establishing the direct exercising of decision-making power by the masses in their organisations; their unrestricted right to scientific research and the free artistic creation, and the democratisation of access to all cultural policies.

The PSUV will carry out a constant struggle to:

- Promote democracy and an assembly-based culture within the Party, and in all spheres where it is present (communities, work fronts, areas of study, activity etc.)
- Struggle to make self-government a reality, with cities, communal councils and communes as the basic political units.
- Promote, where necessary, the creation of new territories and/or municipalities in areas of human settlements, that, for historic, geo-political, cultural, productive or strategic reasons require the overcoming of fragmentation, along with the creation of their respective self-governments.
- Struggle for the transference of the largest amount possible of the planning, execution and control over public policies to these city governments, communes and community councils by the constituent powers and its institutions.
- Promote direct and constant participation. That the largest amount of men and women possible be involved in the resolution of all the problems posed by the struggle in its different phases and levels: from the socialist cities to the commune and the communal councils in different areas (popular power, social missions, water committees, sports committees, cultural committees, housing committees etc) up to the military reserves. In regards to the specific area of industrial workers, two fundamental axes for the implementation of this task should be the concepts of popular control and self-management.

#### 4. *Planned economy. Communal state*

The program of the PSUV proposes to move in the direction of a democratically planned and controlled economy, capable of ending alienated labour and satisfying all the necessities of the masses. Throughout this period of transition, which at this moment marches from a state capitalism dominated by market forces towards a state socialism with a regulated market, the aim is to move towards a communal state socialism, with the strategic objective of totally neutralising the law of value within the functioning of the economy.

The PSUV proposes to build:

- A productive, intermediary, diversified and independent economic model based on the humanistic values of cooperation and the preponderance of common interests.
- A society that prohibits latifundio, transferring these lands into property of the revolutionary state entities, public companies, cooperatives, communities and social organisations capable of administering and making the land productive.
- A society that prohibits monopolies and the monopolists of the means of labour, that is to say, of the "sources of life" [1], or any other activities, agreements, practices, behaviours or omissions by them that make vulnerable the methods and systems of social and collective production.
- A society with property models that privileges public, indirect and direct social, communal, citizens' and collective property, as well as mixed systems, respecting private property that is of public utility or general interest and which is subjected to contributions, charges, restrictions and obligations.
- A society that defends non-alienated labour, with sufficient free time so that human beings have time for voluntary work and rest time for scientific and humanistic creation, as

opposed to the capitalist productive system that revolves around the prolongation of the work day, the prolongation of free labour (for the capitalist owner) or increasing “productivity”, that is, accentuating the stress levels of the labour force.

- A society that is inclined towards collective forms of property and labour, that is capable of distributing the “social product” in order to maintain the means of production, broaden out production, create funds or insurance against accidents or natural phenomena, cover administration costs, satisfy collective necessities (schools, hospitals etc.) and sustain people who are unable to work, and afterwards proceed in “dividing up” for consumption purposes.

## 5. *Defence of nature. Planned production*

The program of the PSUV proposes the preservation of nature and the planning of production for the satisfaction of collective necessities in harmony with the requirements of the ecosystem.

The PSUV fights for:

- The non-proliferation of highly contaminating industries that are not of a highly strategic interests for all the nation.
- The development of technologies in accordance with the socialist and humanist model of society.
- Respecting for popular, traditional and millenarian technologies which produce in harmony with human beings and nature.
- The preservation of water basins and sources of water.
- Raising consciousness about the preservation of nature and against the consumerist model of society that leads to the production of useless objects at the cost of exhausting natural resources.
- The promotion of consumption of ecological products.
- The promotion of collective and public transport use.
- The promotion of developing alternative sources of energy.
- Raising consciousness about saving energy usage.

## 6. *Defence of the revolution and sovereignty*

The program of the PSUV takes up the issue of the defence of the revolution, national sovereignty and public security through an indissoluble union of the FAN (National Armed Forces) and the people in arms.

In this sense, the PSUV takes up the tasks of:

- An alliance with the Armed Forces. A central issue of revolutionary strategy is the alliance of the people as a whole with the National Armed Forces, as well as the workers with the middle classes of the countryside and city (small and medium-sized peasantry, small industrial and commercial bourgeoisie in urban and rural areas).
- The organisation of Popular Militias.
- The organisation of Defence Committees in the Communal Councils, together with the reserves.
- The application of the principles of integral military defense and popular war of resistance.

## 7. *A state based on Popular Power*

The program of the PSUV proposes the construction of a state based on Councils of Popular Power, with the full and democratic participation of workers, campesinos, students, housewives, intellectuals, artists, small producers and petty traders from the countryside and

cities, guaranteeing the widest possible participation and protagonism of the people in determining and realising their destiny.

Based on these fundamentals, the search, elaboration and formulation of a Program of Action is the most delicate task of the Party. It is also the issue that verifies if its leadership bodies respond or not to the expectations of the Party militants, whom, by definition, must be the most finely honed antennas for detecting all the necessities and requirements of the people as a whole, as well as the changes in collective behaviour and transformations in the mood of the masses.

[1] The addition of "sources of life" is to point out that land is understood to be a means of labour.

# *Draft declaration of Principles of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV)*

## 1. The Threat

With the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, humanity has entered full speed into the most dangerous crossroads in history. Capitalism, in its imperialist phase, has reached its limits. After the successive palliative postponements of a structural crisis, which has been corroding the foundations of the system for decades, the dominant socioeconomic mechanisms in the planet are jammed and threatening to explode. The crisis of this irrational mode of production, based on the exploitation of countries, classes and individuals—along with the destruction of nature—pushes the imperialist centres of the world economy further into competition in a savage struggle for control over markets.

Pushed, firstly by the logic of this competition, and then by the necessity to find rentable forms in which to invest massive amounts of excess capital (above all in the arms industry); and at the same time, by the imperative of destroying excess commodities in order to fix up the mechanism and reinitiate the economic cycle, imperialism is dragging the world to war. With the current level of scientific and technological development, unlike the two world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this war will not limit itself to destroying human lives, goods and commodities, so that they can once again be produced and sold: it will end all forms of life on this planet.

The atrocities committed by the United States and smaller powers in the invasion of Iraq is only an ominous prologue to what awaits humanity if it is not able to put a brake on this deadly dynamic. Stopping imperialism and impeding war are therefore the most transcendental priorities for the peoples.

.....

With the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, the floodgates that stopped capital easing its crisis were broken, unloading it, without extenuating circumstances holding it back, onto the dependent nations and its workers, peasants and middle classes. Since then, the brutal cost of sustaining the system has fallen on the shoulders of thousands of millions of people. The price of the capitalist crisis in the imperialist centres is the dizzying increase of misery in the Third World. An unprecedented concentration of wealth into the hands of a few has as its consequence degradation, suffering, hunger and death for the immense majority of humanity, including in an increasing manner the peoples of the imperialist countries.

This avalanche of poverty is the other side of the crisis that threatens life on Earth. Faced with the growing incapacity of the institutions and alliances with which it maintained its power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, imperialism now appeals to the desperate necessities of millions of human beings in order to pit one against another in fratricidal wars, which can result in nothing but destruction, degradation and death on a scale never seen before.

## 2. Defeat poverty

Ending poverty, abandonment, marginalisation and the forced dehumanisation of hundreds of millions of people is therefore another priority, inseparable from the previous one, in this current historical moment in which we live: without ending the polarisation of wealth and the growth of poverty beyond anything ever seen in history, war will be inevitable.

At the same time, world history, and most clearly of all, the Venezuelan experience, has demonstrated that capitalism, even less so in the era of the crisis of imperialism, far from ending poverty, increases it everyday with its irrational evolution, showing the world that

socialism is the only rational, necessary and possible direction to take at this crossroads for humanity.

### 3. Exercising power

The conclusion is clear: in order to end poverty, it is necessary to give power to the poor and build socialism; to impede war, it is necessary to end imperialism.

### 4. The necessity of internationalism

The Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela has placed itself at the vanguard of this struggle, which from within our national borders has projected itself to the world as a whole. The Bolivarian ideal—that Latin American internationalism, which 200 years ago raised the banner of union south of the Río Bravo, independence, sovereignty and the search for the largest sum of happiness possible for the peoples—defeated at the time by the collusion of imperialism with the local oligarchs, today is being reborn through the socialist revolution which, from Venezuela, marks out a horizon of life, peace, liberty, democracy and happiness for all, converting itself into a beacon for thousands of millions of human beings in America and the world.

Venezuela is the victim of attacks, conspiracies and war preparations by the United States not just because of its immense petroleum wealth, which the greed of the industrial powers have always longed for, but because the Bolivarian Revolution is an example for a world submerged in capitalist crisis.

### 5. Defence

The defence of sovereignty is identified with defence of the Bolivarian Socialist Revolution. It converts itself into a landmark as to whether imperialism can advance or not in its bellicose, annexationist, divisive and destructive dynamic across the world.

### 6. Unity

In order to confront such an enormous challenge, the Bolivarian Revolution needs to accrue, consolidate and articulate, with maximum efficiency, the union of the Venezuelan people as a whole; it needs to work tirelessly for Latin American-Caribbean unity. It must join with the nations of the South and the peoples of the entire world to create a force capable of countering, neutralising and defeating imperialism.

The (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela is the instrument for carrying out these strategic tasks that history has placed once again on the table, now behind the banner of socialism. Above all, it will be the political instrument for uniting into revolutionary and socialist action all the victims of capitalism in Venezuela. This social and political unity of the grand majorities will allow the Bolivarian Revolution to carry out the tasks it has set for itself: education, health, housing, work and wellbeing; and will allow for the preparation of the people as a whole, so that together with the FAN [National Armed Forces] at the vanguard, it will be possible to face up to the challenge of defending our sovereignty in the face of the threats of invasion and violence that imperialism will use as a last recourse in order to impede the advance of the Revolution. The Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela is born as an expression of the revolutionary will of the people and their political leadership. It is the product of the revolutionary unity of the majorities and sees the supreme value of a plural, multifaceted unity that encompasses the broadest diversity in regards to ethnic, ideological and political origins, and around which the destiny of the homeland will be forged. Given that it summarises the most outstanding effort towards national and social

emancipation of our past, the most genuine Latin American internationalism, and because it has been the motor of the socialist revolution underway in Venezuela, Bolivarianism is at this moment in history the point of unity of all the perspectives of revolutionary and socialist thought.

## 7. Direct participation

This unity requires the full and democratic participation of workers, peasants, youth, intellectuals, artists, housewives, small producers and petty traders from the countryside and the city, in the formation and running of all its component organs, in discussion and decision making in regards to programs and strategies, and in the promotion and election of its leadership.

An instrument of struggle made up of millions of free men and women, the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela at the same time ratifies the necessity for an effective centralisation for action in the great battles already laid out: against poverty, against exploitation, against the degradation of human beings, against internal reaction and their imperialist masters. A tool for the unification of the grand majorities, the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela is born nevertheless with the conviction that it faces a constant military threat from internal and external enemies of the Revolution, which is why it assumes responsibility, at all levels, for the defence of the homeland, in order to confront and defeat imperialism if it dares to tread on our land.

Brought to life by the government of the Bolivarian Revolution and under the impulse of President Hugo Chavez, the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela nevertheless is not the government. It is the political controller of the objectives of the government and will keep a watch over it to ensure these objectives are carried out. At the moment of its conception into national and international political life, the nexus point between the government and the Party is Commandante Chavez, and the full adoption by the Party of the five motors and the seven strategic guidelines that today summarise the program, the strategy and the tactics of the Bolivarian Revolution.

## 8. The principal responsibility

The responsibility of the Party consists in organising the people on a territorial basis and through fronts: workers, peasants, students, youth, intellectuals, artists, housewives, small producers and petty traders from the countryside and the city, around their necessities and concrete demands and in the function of those strategic and tactical guidelines and the Program adopted by the Founding Congress of the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela. The Party is therefore the point where the expression of popular will and the application of those guidelines of the Revolution (from the construction of houses, sanitary attention, education, up to the armed defence against an eventual foreign invasion) come together.

## 9. Overcome fragmentation and anarchy

This symbiosis, the dialectical interaction which must materialise constantly in the Party, overcomes all notions of abstract autonomy, as much from the government, as from the social movements, in order to make way for a constantly changing synthesis, in which the Party acts at the same time as a two-way transmission belt and leading motor.

The Party is constantly constructing spaces of unity within diversity. Considering the construction of socialism as a great strategic objective, the Party treats all tactical and programmatic proposals, concrete actions, and decisions taken in line with this objective with

the necessary tolerance and broadness, in order to achieve consensus amongst the forces that support the Bolivarian Revolution. The Party understands the possibility and necessity of diverse layers of the population coming onboard the process of constructing socialism as a result of a collective or individual understanding of the risk that the prolongation of capitalist society means.

## 10. Original and creative

Following Simon Rodríguez's maxim, "we invent or we err", the socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela fights for will be original, its own, creative and will have a profoundly collectivist sense of exercising power. The Party will go to great efforts to educate itself and others in human experiences that have distant antecedents, such as American Indian cosmology and primitive Christianity and more recent experiences like those that from the 20<sup>th</sup> century that gave rise to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. But the socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the consequence of a creative praxis, the free exercise of the will and desires of the Venezuelan people. It will be "neither imitation nor copy", to borrow the expression of José Carlos Mariátegui, but rather a "heroic creation". It recognises the diversity of our origins and values the Indigenous, European and African roots that gave rise to our great South American nation. It incorporates from the doctrine of Simon Bolívar, in particular his anti-imperialist vision and his ideas about the necessity of the union of Latin American and Caribbean countries; from Simon Rodríguez, his struggle of a liberating, popular education for all; and from Ezequiel Zamora his struggle for social property of land, his confrontations with the oligarchic powers and his program of social protection.

## 11. The construction of socialism: the only way out

Just as it is indisputable that private property over the means of production in any society determines the relations of labour, human relations and all aspects of life, negating the objectives of a humanist, solidarity-based, socialist society, it is no less true that the transition, above all at this current moment in humanity, demands a careful, objective evaluation of each step taken, in order to always, and at all times, guarantee the conscious participation of the majority and the necessary efficiency to carry out all the requirements of national life, including its defence.

One does not have to be religious in order to identify with and be at one with basic principles of Christ that champion justice, equity and human and fraternal relationships between persons. "You will not oppress the poor and needy day labourer, be they from amongst your brothers or a foreigner that lives in the lands within your city", "Woe to me if you build your house without justice, and your rooms without equity, living off your neighbour for free, and not giving him the salary for his work!", "No one can serve two masters because he will loathe one and love the other. You can not serve both God and wealth", "Blessed are the poor, because for them is the kingdom of heaven, blessed are those that have a hunger and thirst for justice, because they will be quenched, blessed are the merciful, because they will receive compassion".

One does not have to be an atheist in order to agree with Marx's scientific analysis which led him to affirm: "in the capitalist system of production, labour is external to the worker it does not belong to his essential being; that he, therefore, does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind. The worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working, he does not feel himself. This produces the reversion of all human values".

The exploitation of human by human is an impediment to being able to see and recognise the human being within oneself and the one in front of them; it contradicts the sentiments of solidarity; it mutilates the ties of friendship. Capitalism kills by hunger or by glut, but it always kills.

Capitalism contradicts the human condition and goes against the survival of the species. The planet is being destroyed. The irrational imperative for growth is provoking the destruction of ecosystems and threats to extinguish the sources of life on Earth. This catastrophic dynamic is caused by the irrationality of a socioeconomic system that omits the necessities of humanity and acts under the obligation of its own logic, compelled towards constant growth in the pursuit of profit. In this crazy race, capitalism provokes periodic moments of crisis where, again in the pursuit of profit, it is necessary to destroy massive amounts of human lives and material goods.

Ever since human society was divided into classes, there has been resistance and struggle against oppression and exploitation. But with the victory of capitalism over feudalism and the dominance of the capitalist mode of production at the world scale, the social struggles of the industrial workers' movement fused with the most advanced thought of its time and gave rise to the struggle for a socialism based on science and the most deeply felt sentiments of human beings.

Simultaneously, in our continent, Simon Bolivar was laying the foundations for national and social emancipation with his liberatory struggle and his humanist and revolutionary vision, affirming words that today are fundamental for the union of our peoples and the social transformation of our time.

Faced with the crisis of the system and the grave threats that come with it, the contemporary challenge consists in guiding action in such a way that the exploited and oppressed masses of Venezuela assume the maximum amount of knowledge of history, the economy and political theory, in order to tackle the immense task of responding in an original manner, embedded in concrete reality, to the roots of what it means to be Venezuelan, the cultural particularities, including of each region and social group, in front of every normal day demands, each difficulty put forward by the transition from capitalism to socialism.

For the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela there are no recipes from a manual, nor can there be, nor impositions by anyone who is not the conscious, organised Venezuelan people themselves, standing up and ready for combat

Inter-imperialist competition opens up cracks between the owners of the world and by default creates a multi-polar world in constant turmoil, to which the United States can only counterpose its military supremacy. Simultaneously, due to the demands to maintain its rate of profit, the out of control voracity of imperialism subjugates the bourgeoisies of sub-developed countries beyond what is tolerable. Those who for two centuries were submissive minor partners, who benefited from the looting of their own peoples, see themselves pushed into conflicts that fracture their former association of convenience. While the disputes between imperialists paralyses the world institutions that came into being at the end of the Second World War, and fragments at every point on the globe the hegemonic bloc comprised of imperialists and subordinated capital, the combined impact of this phenomena, within a framework of constant and growing popular rebellion, has worked towards demolishing the institutions through which political power was sustained in countries with dependent and sub-developed economies. The world is therefore witnessing realignments of all types, always to the detriment of the power of the United States.

This conjuncture opens up the perspective of calling for an international anti-imperialist bloc on a grand scale, with the participation of national, provincial and local governments, different types of social movements and political forces from a broad ideological viewpoint. The idea is to unite in action hundreds of millions of people throughout the entire world against imperialism and its wars.

Similarly, in Latin America there exists the possibility of producing a qualitative transformation in the politico-organisational reality of tens of millions of exploited and oppressed. The Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela therefore sees the necessity of forging instruments in which they can converge, and at the same time remake universal revolutionary thought, as the vanguard in an era of immense challenges and great victories: capitalism is international; the revolution is international; our thought and the action must be international.

Action in function of the notion of a global anti-imperialist bloc and the revolutionary and socialist convergence of the Latin American-Caribbean peoples, will guide the steps taken by the Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela with the certainty that making these objectives a reality will change the relationship of forces at the international scale and inaugurate a new historic era.

The agony of imperialism is an unavoidable fact. The Party (Bolivarian Party for the Socialist Revolution) of Venezuela is born in order to defend the homeland, to lead the revolution towards its emancipatory objective, to join with all the other peoples of the world in the task of burying imperialism and building a new world, fit for a free and full humanity

[Translated by Federico Fuentes and Kiraz Janicke for Links.] Source URL:

<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/> Printed: February 8<sup>th</sup> 2008